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23 March 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR OF TRAINING

SUBJECT: Comments on use of Phase II Evaluation Form

These are preliminary comments on behalf of the Clandestine Services Training Committee on the first results of the use of the new training evaluation form No. 51-86 used for Phase II of the Basic Training Program. The comments are offered in keeping with the accepted view that this form was intended to be merely experimental and subject to all changes which experience would dictate. The views expressed are not only those of

25X1A Mr. [REDACTED] and myself, but are also a composite of the views of the Area Division Training Liaison Officers based on their own reactions and those of the supervisors of the personnel on whom the evaluations were submitted:

1. Performance Record (Section II)

In general, comments on this part of the Form are favorable with the exception that the distribution table, which was submitted separately as a cover sheet, should be included on the form itself. It is generally felt that the adjectival ratings of the general knowledge of the student are simply stated and arranged and give the supervisor a quick, over-all view of the student's general academic accomplishment. Similarly, the form for rating the specific topics in the course is also deemed to be well arranged and easy to read even though there is still question, as there was on the old form, as to the subdivision of each rating into "understanding" and "application".

2. Trait Record (Section III)

The major objections to the Form refer to Section III, "Trait Record." Broadly, these objections range all the way from the view that personality traits cannot be effectively evaluated in a course of only five weeks (with which views this Committee does not agree) to some relatively minor suggestions about typographical arrangement. In between these two ends of the scale of criticism there are several substantial objections made which may be summarized as follows:

- (1) The results as charted on the Form are difficult to understand and even when understood are only truly meaningful, in terms of

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personal traits which would be significant in clandestine operations. In addition, this part of the form is regarded as unnecessarily complicated and cumbersome. The method used has been described as being like "counting the legs and dividing by four" in counting numbers of cattle.

(2) The five major degrees of measurement of traits, such as "does not apply," "applies to a limited degree," etc. are in themselves not precise ways of attempting measurement of the listed personality items if, indeed, there exists anyway of scientifically measuring such traits as most of those listed. Moreover, it is dubious whether a reader of the results or for that matter the instructor himself can interpret or apply the further subdivision of these five general measurements into five further gradations of such descriptions as "does not apply" or twenty-five degrees of such imponderables as "can think on his feet," "able to influence other," "talks too much," and outstandingly the item, "moves very quickly to the wrong conclusion".

(3) Too many of the traits are stated in the negative rather than in the affirmative.

(4) Unjustifiable damage may be done to the individual and to his usefulness to the Agency if the reports on these traits are accepted as objective judgments (as they are most likely to be) when placed in a personnel file or folder which may be read in the future by a person totally unacquainted with the intent and method of arriving at these training descriptions. The fact that all these trait ratings are necessarily subjective is acknowledged within the training community, but it is doubtful that this fact can be sufficiently impressed upon present and future supervisors of the individual, career boards, and others reviewing the personnel file in the future. For instance, a marking that indicates that an individual "talks too much," although it was intended in the classroom situation perhaps merely to indicate that the student monopolized too much of the discussion, could be interpreted in a security review as indicating that the person is garrulous to an extent that may compromise security, in other words that he is a "security risk".

3. Overall Ratings (Section IV)

As to Section IV, "Overall Ratings," some questions have been raised as to the capability of the instructor to check the items which indicate "suitability for clandestine activities". In the discussions on the draft of this form, this Committee and the Divisional Training Liaison Officers were assured that only rarely would this part of the form be checked by the instructors, but we find now that this has been done in every instance.

h. As to the general comments made at the bottom of the form, these have varied considerably. In several instances they have been perhaps more truly meaningful than anything else on the form; in other instances they

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have been apparently

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have been apparently contradictory within themselves or against the rest of the evaluation, and in some cases they have been so poorly phrased as to cloud the meaning. What does it mean, for instance, that a student has a "very definite type of personality"? Presumably, everybody has a definite type of personality. This sort of comment needs specification before it can have any significance for the reader. The situation would seem to call for better training of instructors in making general, sum-up comments about students.

5. The feeling of all the Area Divisions and that of the Committee is that the form should be considerably revised and simplified, except for Sections I and II. One strong body of opinion is that a careful revision should be made of the personality traits which supervisors really wish to have evaluated and which it is feasible for instructors to observe, out of which there should be devised a new list which could serve as a checklist for the instructor in preparing simple, declarative statements about the student's strengths and weaknesses as demonstrated in the classroom situation.

6. In accordance with previous collaborative efforts in developing evaluation procedures and with our recent oral discussions with you on this subject, it will be appreciated if we can discuss further with the appropriate members of your staff on the revision of Form 51-86 along the line suggested by these comments.

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[REDACTED]
Chairman,
Clandestine Services Training Committee

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